

February 11, 2015

### **Surrendering your green card while applying for a visa**

**Q:** *I have been a Legal Permanent Resident of the United States for many years, but recently divorced my American citizen husband and returned to Jamaica to take care of my ailing mother. I had a nonimmigrant visa for over 10 years, which was cancelled when my immigrant visa was issued.*

I am considering surrendering my green card and obtaining a new nonimmigrant visa, but I have heard that the U.S. Embassy does not look favorably upon people who abandon their permanent residency. What is the procedure for surrendering my green card, and will it affect my ability to get a nonimmigrant visa to the United States?

**A:** You've been misinformed. Abandonment of a green card does not generate our disfavor. On the contrary, in most instances, it confirms that you have no intention of residing in the United States, and that you probably qualify for a visitor's visa. Thanks for asking this important question, and here is all the information you need.

You may come to the U.S. Embassy to surrender your legal permanent resident (LPR) card (often called a 'green card'), and if you wish you can also apply for a nonimmigrant visitor's visa at the same time you surrender your green card. Surrendering a legal permanent residency card does not entitle an applicant to a visa, nor will it prevent an applicant from obtaining one. These processes are separate and handled in different ways. Below, we have outlined the procedures for ending your U.S. residency, as well as surrendering your green card while applying for a visa at the same time.

### **Surrendering Your Green Card While Applying for a Visa**

Most people who abandon their green cards do so while applying for a visitor's visa. Anyone who surrenders their legal permanent residency card is eligible to apply for a nonimmigrant visa and will be subject to the same requirements as all other visa applicants. To apply for the visitor's visa, access the website of our authorized service provider to obtain information on how to complete the application form, pay the fee, and schedule an appointment: <https://usvisa-info.com>.

Once you arrive for the scheduled visa appointment, tell the Embassy intake personnel that you'd also like to surrender your green card during the appointment. You'll then follow the same process as above and once you've surrendered the green card, continue to interview with the consular officer for the visa.

As with all applicants, former LPRs will be required to demonstrate that they do not intend to immigrate to the United States. You should be prepared to discuss how you are now established in Jamaica after having resided in the U.S., as well as proof that you now only intend to stay in the United States temporarily.

Surrendering your legal permanent residency card does not positively or negatively affect your ability to obtain a nonimmigrant visa, but just like all other aspects of your application, your previous permanent residency in the United States will be considered as the officer determine your qualifications for a visa. During your interview, please talk honestly and openly about your reasons for abandoning your LPR status, your ties to Jamaica, and your current proposed purpose of travel to the United States.

### **Process for Surrendering a Green Card Without Applying for a Visitor's Visa**

Even if you do not wish to apply for a visitor's visa, you can abandon your green card separately. Anyone wishing to abandon their LPR status can come to the Embassy between the hours of 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. any weekday, no appointment necessary. The only things the applicant must bring to the Embassy are the LPR card they wish to surrender and a secondary form of identification, such as a passport or driver's license, to verify their identity.

The Embassy intake personnel will provide you with a blank form I-407 (Abandonment of Lawful Permanent Resident Status) that you can complete. There is no cost for the application form, nor is there a processing fee. You will meet with a consular officer to submit the I-407 and need to demonstrate that you:

- are abandoning your LPR status wilfully and voluntarily; and
- understand that abandonment is permanent and irrevocable.

Once the officer is satisfied that the requirements have been met and you have submitted your application, you will no longer be a lawful permanent resident of the United States. You will receive a photocopy of the completed I-407, which will serve as your receipt. The completed I-407 must be presented with the all other necessary documentation if and when you apply in the future for a nonimmigrant visa.

If you have additional questions about legal permanent residency, or U.S. citizenship, we encourage you to visit the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service's website at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov). For any visa-related questions, and instructions on making an appointment for a nonimmigrant visa interview, please visit <https://usvisa-info.com>.

*You can find more information about how to travel to the U.S. on our website, [www.kingston.usembassy.gov](http://www.kingston.usembassy.gov) and the website of our authorized service provider at <https://usvisa-info.com>. Keep on top of Embassy news on our Facebook page,*

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica> and by following @USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages.